

Dear Mr. Micham, Ms. Elston, Mr. Konik, and Honorable Administrator Jackson,

The state of Michigan needs your help ... and we need it NOW.

As I'm sure you are aware, Kennecott Eagle Minerals (Rio Tinto) is up in the north-central portion of the Upper Peninsula causing quite a bit of consternation and doing their utmost to get county, state, and federal legislators to do their bidding regarding their proposed copper/nickel hardrock (sulfide) mine near Big Bay, MI and the proposed haul road from the mine to a processing facility 25 miles south in Humboldt.

You folks, in conjunction with the US Army Corp of Engineers and the Fish and Wildlife Service have done an outstanding job to date calling Kennecott's bluff regarding the so-called "Woodlands Road/County Rd 595", telling them to go back to the drawing board and do it right.

However, Kennecott is still looking to take the easy way out.

Just this past week, both the Michigan House (HB 4303, introduced by Ed McBroom) and the Michigan Senate (SB 168, introduced by Tom Casperson) have put forth legislation to allow the by-passing of protection and mitigation of wetlands if associated with an existing roadway (in this case, perhaps, the ATV/snowmobile trail).

I know you don't want to get involved in state politics; however, ***these pieces of legislation are being promulgated in an effort to BYPASS THE EPA !***

Secondly, our new Governor (Rick Snyder) is looking to implement further reductions in force throughout state agencies, including the ***Michigan Department of Environmental Quality***.

These folks are supposed to safeguard our environment. They are ***not rising up to the challenge. They are not doing their job.***

They most certainly don't have the expertise that the EPA possesses. Nor do I believe them to have the impartiality. In fact, one of their lead representatives on the project didn't even consider the Michigan Law (part 632) when reviewing KEMC's application!

Lastly, as you well know, there is pressure right now across the nation to relax the wetlands permitting process, the Clean Air Act, and the Clean Water Act. Those bent on making it more attractive and easier for corporations to do business in their state want you folks to kindly step

out of the way.

Hence, we have in the makings all the ingredients for a "Perfect Storm" - a potential disaster stretching 50 miles (from Big Bay all the way over to Keweenaw Bay) as well as the counties of Baraga and Ontonagon.

We need you to step in and reclaim jurisdiction over this potential nightmare. Michigan is one of only two states that have assumed responsibility for administering the wetland permitting program for the Clean Water Act. As you can see, if this legislation passes, all will be for nought.

***We need the shenanigans to stop. You have the power, expertise, and impartiality to do it.***

From her speeches and letters, I can tell that Administrator Jackson truly does give a damn; her Heart is in it. Along with her and your colleagues in Region Five, I beseech you to please work to reclaim the integrity of our water protection permitting and regulatory processes.

With Gratitude for all you have done and continue to do,

Margaret Comfort, PA-C

Michigamme, MI